

far outweigh the irritation of its errors. This translation of a personal diary from such a formative period of Amundsen's career as an explorer offers a valuable insight into the man and an equally useful addition to the current literature.

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**HUNTING TRADITION IN A CHANGING WORLD: YUP'IK LIVES IN ALASKA TODAY.** By ANN FIENUP-RIORDAN, with WILLIAM TYSON, PAUL JOHN, MARIE MEADE, and JOHN ACTIVE. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2000. xx + 310 p., photographs, index, bib. Hardbound, US\$52.00; Softbound, US\$22.00.

Ann Fienup-Riordan's latest book is a stimulating look at her anthropological and personal relationships among the Yup'ik in southwestern Alaska. Reflecting on 25 years of research in the region, describing recent projects, including stories, commentary, and other material from her Yup'ik co-authors, she offers several views of the changing world of Alaska Natives, of the relationship between anthropologist and subject, and of the very goals of anthropology itself. In doing so, she looks unflinchingly at her own research in the past, charting her development amid the social, academic, and political shifts of the past quarter-century.

The title reflects her quest and exemplifies a central theme of multiplicity of meaning. *Hunting Tradition in a Changing World* is in part about hunting, though only a little. A few years ago, this meaning might have been the only interpretation of such a title—Yup'ik seen as hunters, their economic and cultural relationship to the environment the focus of anthropological research and understanding. Today, however, it means much more. "Hunting tradition" refers equally well to the quest of the Yup'ik themselves to find their own history and to celebrate it in their own terms, not through the eyes of the explorers, missionaries, or collectors who left the only written records of a century ago. One of the more compelling sections of the book is the description of Yup'ik elders visiting Berlin's Museum für Völkerkunde to examine the thousands of Yup'ik artifacts in its collection, reclaiming not the physical objects but their own ties to their own history.

*Hunting Tradition in a Changing World* is also about anthropology and its task of identifying and describing "tradition" in the form of culture. The task of anthropology, to help "us" understand "the Other," is today loaded with questions about whether one can understand another,

what it means to describe another people, how this process reflects and affects the relationships between researcher and subject. Here, the book is really a progress report. Fienup-Riordan describes the path of her own career, in part in the light of the sweeping changes that have occurred in anthropology as a discipline.

Both the richness and the ambiguity of research have increased dramatically since Fienup-Riordan first went to the Yup'ik area in 1974. Her insights about the Yup'ik are the product of two-and-a-half decades of building relationships and thinking carefully about what it all means. On the one hand, it is astonishing to think how much we all learn from the experience of Yup'ik elders in a Berlin museum. On the other hand, it is sobering to realize how simplistic our view has often been of what anthropological research really entails. Far from an objective examination of another culture and its manifestations, such research is a transaction: the informant, too, has goals, reasons for telling what he or she is telling. Stories and events have multiple meanings, depending on context and interpretation. In this quest, the notion of a single Truth must be abandoned, to be replaced with a sense of deeper, if more ambiguous, meaning.

An example is the incorporation of traditional symbols, rituals, and beliefs in the Christian faith and practices of the Yup'ik region. Fienup-Riordan describes how the apparently simple story of the arrival of missionaries and the conversion of the Yup'ik to Christianity is more accurately a complex tale involving the relationship of pre-Christian beliefs to Biblical teachings, the translation of Christian terms into Yup'ik words already full of spiritual meaning, and the eventual incorporation by the church of certain traditional rituals. These rituals, which had once been denounced by the church, now stand for Christian beliefs, Yup'ik beliefs, and the idea that Christian teachings had been anticipated long before missionaries arrived.

On a personal level, the anthropological enterprise is complicated by the fact that researchers are liable to make friends among those they wish to study. Having worked in the community of Toksook Bay since 1974, Fienup-Riordan—along with her family—is part of the local landscape. This impressive time span gives her both an unusual degree of insight into the societal changes that have taken place and a rich background to draw on for her descriptions of the personal relationships that make research more immediate. Yet such research is also more challenging: how can one describe one's friends?

Fienup-Riordan addresses these topics and more with grace and humor. While the writing tends to jargon at times, these lapses are fortunately few, and most of the book is written clearly and well. Her account of the difficulties of learning Yup'ik is delightful, and her modest assessment of her facility in the language perhaps understates the significance of her efforts to learn it. James Barker's black-and-white photographs enhance the text with striking images of Yup'ik life. The selection of writings and stories by her Yup'ik co-authors adds to the

depth of the book. These are not mere appendices to be skimmed, but alternative commentaries on the points that Fienup-Riordan raises.

As Fienup-Riordan's work moves toward collaboration, she raises the significant questions of what "collaboration" really means in this context and how it really works. This book is an impressive attempt to put some answers into practice, and one that should spur others to build on her approach. For anyone interested in anthropology, Native peoples, or work in a cross-cultural setting, *Hunting Tradition in a Changing World* is a fascinating journey along one researcher's path to make sense of the shifting landscape of the modern Arctic.

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**MUSKOXEN AND THEIR HUNTERS: A HISTORY.** By PETER C. LENT. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999. xi + 324 p., b&w illus., appendix, notes, bib., index. Hardbound. US\$57.50.

If we test the popularity of the muskox by that touchstone of instant culture, the Internet, it doesn't fare well. With a mere 7000 hits, the muskox is skewered by the rhinoceros (70,000), flattened by the elephant (700,000) and overwhelmed by the dog (7,000,000). We must look to the banteng to find a beast that gets less attention. Perhaps it is this that makes Peter Lent's book both possible and important. The volume of information that Lent had to organize was small enough to be encompassed by one person, but large and complete enough to make a fascinating story, the story of one species and its relationship to man.

Since he wrote an undergraduate term paper on muskoxen in the late 1950s, the author has worked extensively with the species and assiduously collected information. The result is a series of essays that extend chronologically from the Pliocene to the present and from paleontology to the emerging *qiviut* (fine muskox underwool) industry. The first chapter, on the origins of muskoxen, provides (among many other things) a wonderful description of the Beringian mammoth steppe: open, cool, and arid, but populated by mammoths, huge steppe bison, horses, and occasional muskoxen and their extinct, long-legged relatives. If there were a time machine, it is there that I would go, but I would be careful to avoid lions, scimitar cats, and short-faced bears, having been forewarned by an engaging digression on the response of muskoxen to these predators and to the predators of today.

I might also think it wise to avoid the local people. These dangerous Pleistocene predators appear in the next chapter, which tells us that in Europe and Asia, humans

killed muskoxen only occasionally; but then they began to follow the "Muskox Way," a route pioneered by muskoxen, to the extreme north of the Arctic Archipelago. Here, when the climate was a little milder, the pre-Dorset people lived and died, and in places left layer upon layer of muskox bones. Subsequent chapters deal with the relationship of the Dorset, Thule, and Dene peoples to muskoxen and the impact of modern explorers, the hide trade, and trophy seekers.

One could think some of this a little dry, and indeed it might be, if it were not exquisitely embellished with historical analysis, mild archaeological controversy, and a steady undercurrent of muskox biology. And through much of this section, Lent is intent on discreetly undermining one of those comfortable notions that we would all love to accept if only it were true. I mean the idea that indigenous peoples, unlike technological man, did not overexploit their resources. While he certainly does not accuse such people of profligate killing, Lent argues that the imperative needs of subsistence hunters were generally pragmatic and short-term, and that, "when muskox numbers were low, or populations were extirpated, humans turned their attentions elsewhere, either by moving or by shifting to alternate prey" (p. 222). Lent does not support the view that the hunter-gathers of the North were intuitive wildlife managers who successfully maximized sustainable yield.

Later chapters deal with the better-known history of deliberate muskox conservation: restraint of hunting, refuge creation, introduction, reintroduction, and finally renewed hunting and licensed slaughter on a large scale. The author had a direct role in some of this, and he recounts the difficulties—political and practical—in heartfelt detail. In human affairs, hunting is followed by domestication, and here again, Lent's association with the Alaskan experience of muskox "farming" pays dividends. There is no attempt to disguise the failures or the successes, or to cover the skepticism of the many with the driving enthusiasm of a few. It is hard for modern people to achieve in decades what took our Neolithic ancestors millennia to accomplish, and Lent has no illusion that the job is done. On the other hand, there is a persistent optimism that the job can be done and is worth doing.

But just what does domestication of muskoxen mean? Are muskoxen going to be farmed as if they were a monster kind of sheep, or are they to be managed a little like the "browse deer" of the 17th century New Forest? These red deer freely ranged the forest, but were periodically "gathered by a call" and given supplemental feeding in special enclosures. It is said that such deer "were by that means very fat and very tame." Lent clearly suspects that a similar approach might work with muskoxen, and I agree.

A moment's arithmetic shows that about 200 tons of *qiviut* are shed onto the Canadian tundra each year. If only 1% of this could be harvested, it would equal the *qiviut* usually obtained from the commercial muskox hunt on Banks Island. Now one of the enduring things that I have learned from my association with very tame muskoxen is